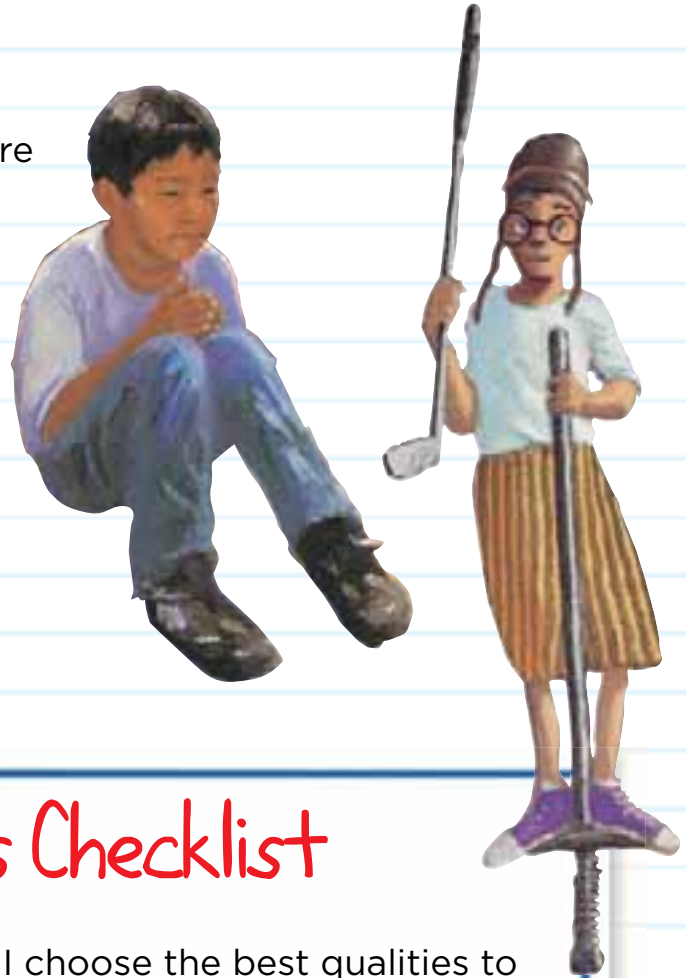


VISIT...

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Your Turn

Choose two characters to compare and contrast. They can be from the same story or from two different stories. Write a compare and contrast essay. Be careful to organize it so that the points are easy to follow. Include transitions between paragraphs. Use the writer's checklist to check your writing.



Writer's Checklist

- ☒ **Ideas and Content:** Did I choose the best qualities to compare and contrast?
- ☒ **Organization:** Can the reader easily follow the traits I am comparing and contrasting?
- ☒ **Voice:** Does my personality show through where I want it to?
- ☐ **Word Choice:** Did I use words that signal **transitions** between paragraphs?
- ☒ **Sentence Fluency:** Did I rewrite any sentences that sounded awkward? Does my writing flow smoothly?
- ☒ **Conventions:** Did I use *more* and *most* correctly? Did I check my spelling?





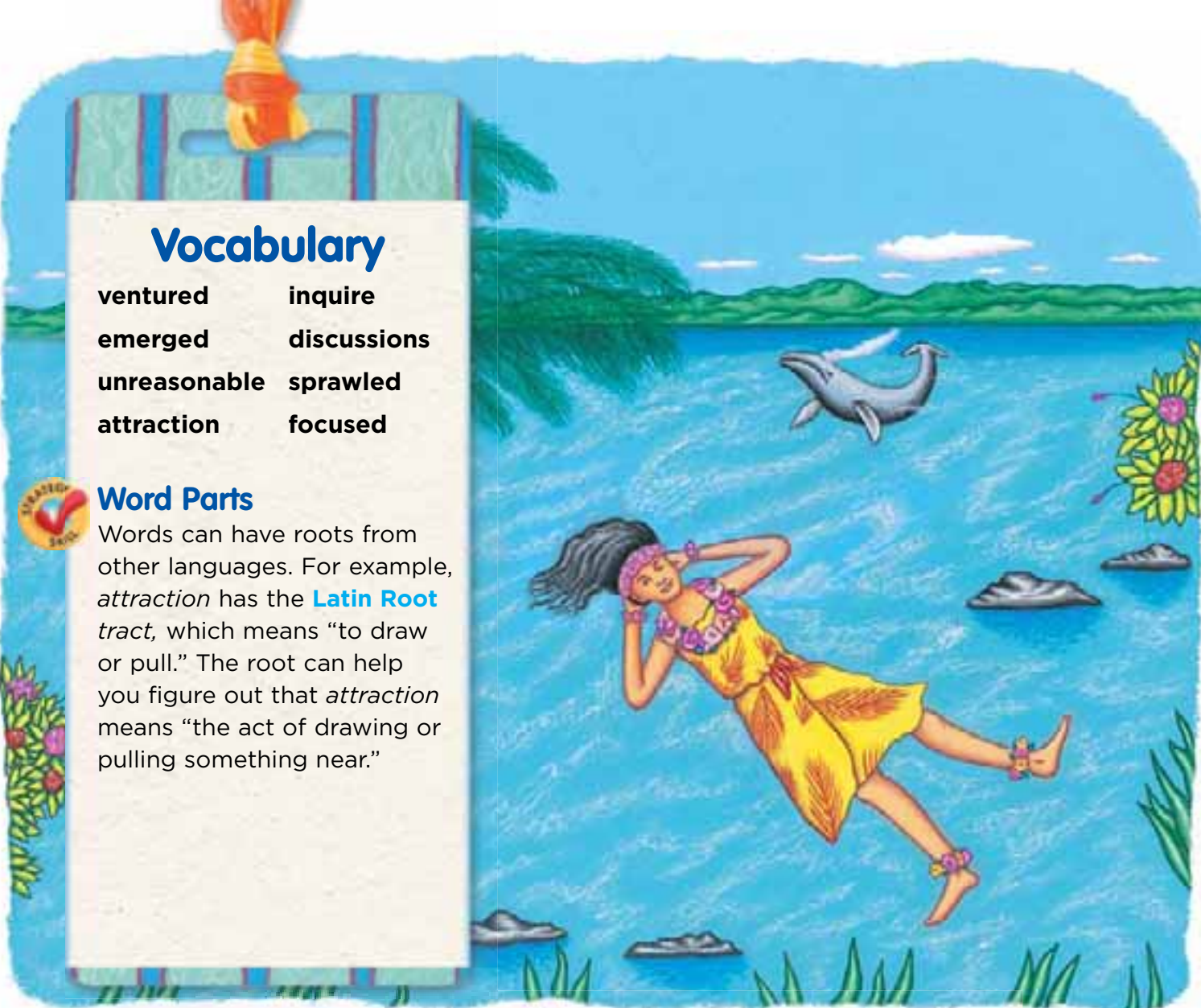
Talk About It

What are some words that come to mind when you think about whales? How many different kinds of whales do you know about?



Find out more about whales at www.macmillanmh.com

WHALES



Vocabulary

ventured	inquire
emerged	discussions
unreasonable	sprawled
attraction	focused



Word Parts

Words can have roots from other languages. For example, *attraction* has the **Latin Root** *tract*, which means “to draw or pull.” The root can help you figure out that *attraction* means “the act of drawing or pulling something near.”

A Song for Makaio

by Tamira Jackson

Long ago, near the islands now called Hawaii, lived a young girl named Makaio. She loved to swim and listen to the whales sing. The ocean could be dangerous, but Makaio did not mind the challenge. During the winter months, she bravely **ventured** into the water. Every day Makaio would float for hours, listening to the whale songs.

She always looked wiser when she **emerged** from the waves and walked onto the beach.

Though others could see her, Makaio could not see them. She was blind. Her other senses were unusually strong as a result. In fact, Makaio was the only one who could hear the whales sing.

Makaio said she could recognize each whale by his voice. She did not think it was strange or **unreasonable** to spend so much time listening to whales.

Whenever a new whale joined the group, Makaio would know. The newcomer would sing a different song. Gradually over several winters, the other males would start singing the new whale's song. The **attraction** that pulled Makaio towards the whales had to do with how they respected each other and the kindness they showed each other.

Makaio lived a long life. During her lifetime many of her whale friends died. Each time this happened, Makaio would have a sad look in her eyes. The islanders would **inquire** about what had happened. Makaio would answer simply, "One of my whale friends has died. I miss his voice."

She never wanted to have long **discussions** about it.

One night during her eightieth winter, Makaio did not return to the village. The islanders searched the beach. There they found a whale **sprawled** out on the shore. Next to him was Makaio. Her eyes seemed to be **focused** on the whale's long body spread awkwardly on the sand.

When the villagers reached her, Makaio spoke softly. "The voice of my very first whale friend has gone. It is time for me to go now, too. Do not be sad. Remember the whales' lessons: Learn from others. Always accept newcomers." With those words, Makaio died.

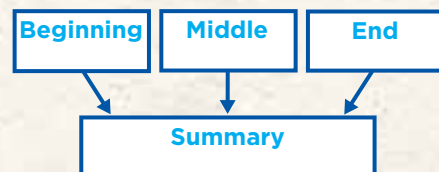
To this day people still try to understand the mystery of whale songs. Perhaps Makaio told us their secret many centuries ago.

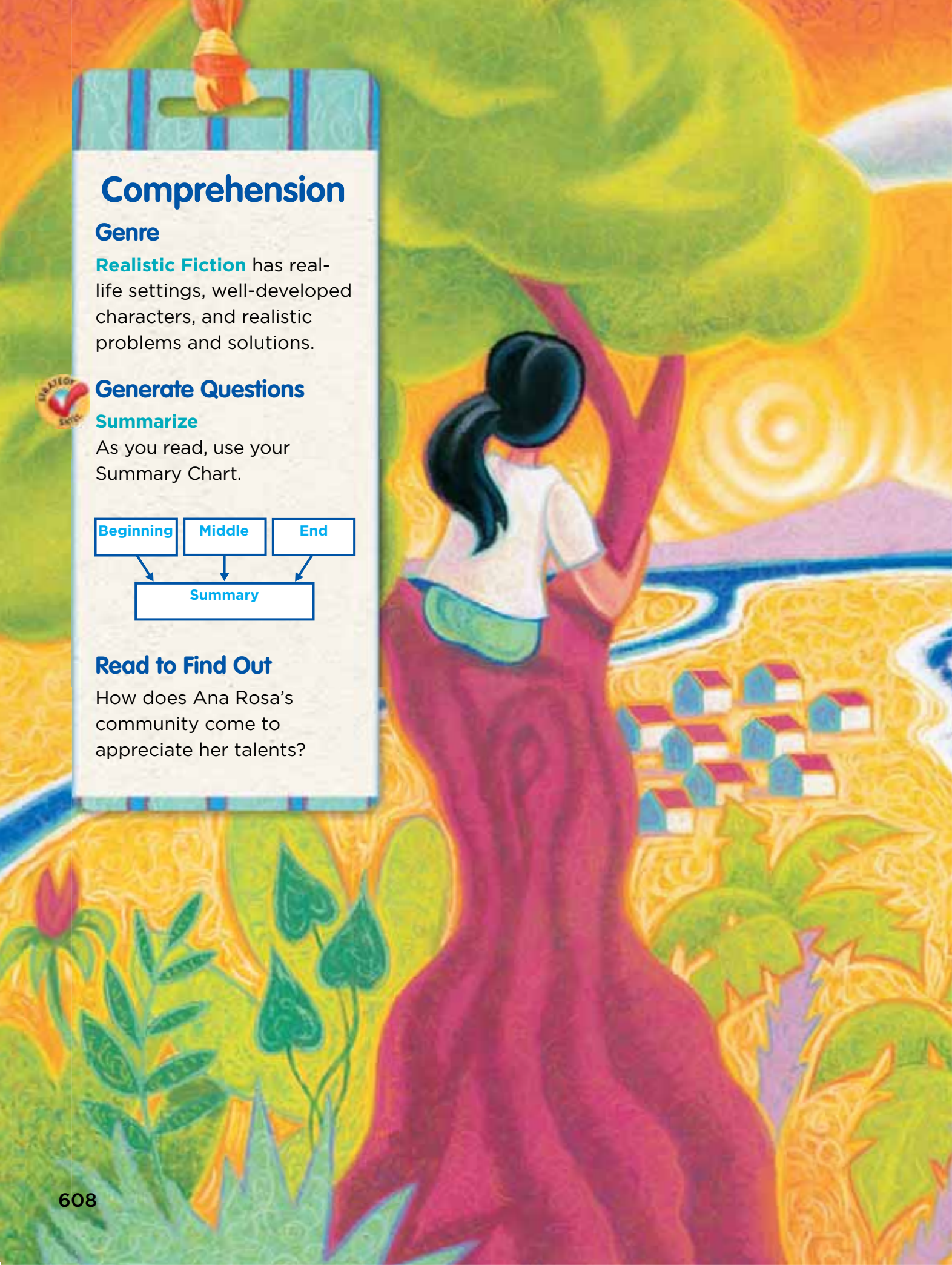
Reread for Comprehension



Generate Questions Summarize

A Summary Chart helps you answer questions about what happens at the beginning, middle, and end of a story. Use your Summary Chart as you reread "A Song for Makaio" to summarize the important ideas in the selection.





Comprehension

Genre

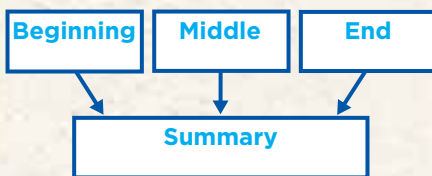
Realistic Fiction has real-life settings, well-developed characters, and realistic problems and solutions.



Generate Questions

Summarize

As you read, use your Summary Chart.



Read to Find Out

How does Ana Rosa's community come to appreciate her talents?

The Gri Gri Tree

from

The Color of My Words

by Lynn Joseph

illustrated by Marla Baggetta



No one had to point out that I was different from everyone else in our village. It was clear from the first day I began climbing the gri gri tree and staying up there for hours.

"What's wrong with your daughter?" neighbors asked Mami.

"She's not right in her head," they answered themselves, when Mami only shrugged her shoulders.

Papi would say, "Nothing wrong with sitting in a tree. It's the same as sitting on a porch except it's higher."

Roberto would climb up with me sometimes but he got bored quickly and swung down, yelling like a monkey. Angela shook her head at me and said I would never be a real *chica*, because *chicas* do not climb trees when they are twelve years old.

Not even Guario understood, although he tried. He asked me once what I did up there. That was more than anyone else had **ventured** to **inquire**.

I told him I looked around.



He asked if I didn't think I was wasting a lot of time, when I could be doing something to prepare for my future such as studying English.

Guario always had his mind on the future. Sometimes I think that he was tormented by all of us who didn't particularly care what tomorrow was going to bring. And really, what was there to know—either it would rain or it would not. But it was definitely going to be hot and Mami was going to cook and Papi was going to sit on the porch and the radio was going to play *merengues* all day. That was for sure.

Besides, I already knew what I wanted to do in my future. I wanted to be a writer, but only Mami knew that. If I told Guario, he would say I was **unreasonable**. If I told anyone else, they would laugh. But in my gri gri tree, I could be anything I wanted to be—even a writer with words for everything I saw from my leafy green hideout.



I could see the ocean glittering silver in the sunlight. I could see people trudging along the dusty road from Sosúa; some balancing buckets of water on their heads. I could see boys playing baseball in the schoolyard with a tree branch bat and a rubber band ball. I could see the river, meandering over rocks, hungry for rain. Far off in Puerto Plata, I could see Mount Isabel de Torres, a green giant with misty white curls dancing 'round her head.

I could see the sleepy lagoon and the sad little homes of the lagoon people. I could see the birds that flew past my gri gri, their ruby-and-gold velvet feathers shimmering on their tiny bodies. I could see the rainbows that glowed in the sea-sky after a rain passed. I could count the sunset roses in Señora Garcia's backyard. I could see my teacher climbing the hill near her house, and I could see Papi sitting on our porch, nodding off to sleep.

Then one day I saw something that I had never seen before and I was so scared that I almost fell out of the tree. There I was looking at the sea when suddenly out of it rose a giant monster, tall and black and covering the sun with its shadow. Before I could scream, the monster fell back into the sea.

I scrambled down the tree quickly and ran toward my house, shouting “Papi, there’s a monster in the sea!”

Papi woke from his siesta. “¿*Qué pasa?*”

“A monster,” I repeated. “A giant sea monster and it’s coming this way!”

I shouted inside the house. “Mami, come quick. There’s a monster in the sea. I saw it.”

Mami came outside and Angela followed her. They were drying their hands from washing the lunch dishes.

Everyone looked at me as if I were crazy.

“It’s true,” I said, jumping up and down.

Mami made me sit down and describe exactly what I saw. Before I had finished, Angela shouted my news to her best friend walking by. Then Papi waved over some of his domino-playing *amigos* and told them what I saw from on top of my gri gri tree.

Soon our porch was surrounded with people all asking me to tell my story again.





When I had told it for the fourth time, Señor Garcia, the *colmado* owner, began to laugh.

“You must have fallen asleep in the tree and had a bad dream, *cariño*,” he said.

“No,” I replied, shaking my head. “I saw it.”

But his words had relieved everyone’s fears of a sea monster. “Yes,” they agreed. “You must have imagined it.”

“No, you idiots,” I wanted to shout. “I didn’t imagine anything.” But I kept quiet because Mami and Papi would not like it if I shouted at the neighbors and called them idiots. That was for sure.

As everyone sat down on the porch to share a drink and talk about my sea monster, I slipped away and ran to my gri gri tree. I heard Mami calling me, but I pretended I didn’t hear and climbed up the tree fast. I needed to find out if what I had seen would come back again.

I sat down on my usual branch and tucked a few leaves away from my eyes. Then I stared at the sea. I looked so hard and for so long that its blueness filled up my eyeballs and I had to blink a lot so I wouldn’t go blind.

The afternoon faded into evening and the sea’s blueness turned gray. I watched and waited. My stomach made grumbling noises but I covered them with my hand.

Then, just as I began to think that maybe I had imagined it after all, I saw a splash of white water. The splash of water rose up, up until it was high in the air like a magic fountain.

“It’s a volcano,” I whispered. I remembered that my teacher had told us how many of the Caribbean islands had been formed by volcanoes that rose out of the sea.

I gasped. Maybe I was seeing the beginning of a brand-new island right next to the República Dominicana. As I kept on looking, a black shape **emerged** out of the fountain of water. It rose and turned, as if doing a dance, and that’s when I saw the gleaming white throat of the sea monster.

It hovered in between heaven and ocean for a few seconds and then fell back into the water with a splash that sprayed salt drops as high as the pearl-pink clouds.



My heart beat furiously and I steadied myself so I wouldn't fall down from the tree. I was right. I had not imagined anything. There really was a sea monster out there. But this time I didn't rush down to tell anyone.

What would the people do, I wondered. Would they try to find it? Or maybe to kill it? Somehow, although I didn't know why, I could tell that the sea monster was not dangerous. It just wanted to swim and splash and jump out of the sea the same way I jumped over the waves.

I climbed down the tree and went home. The first thing I wanted to do was eat, but people were all over the porch talking wildly. "We saw it, Ana Rosa," they shouted. "We saw that big sea monster of yours."

Mami was passing around a plate of *dulces*, the sweet milk candy that I love. She must have just made them because they were still warm and soft.

Children were carrying huge plates filled with different foods that their mothers had made. Angela was directing them to put the food here or there on our big table. I saw plates piled high with *arroz con pollo*, *plátanos fritos*, and *batatas fritas*.

Señor Garcia apologized over and over to me. About a hundred people were gathered on our porch, in the yard, and along the roadside, talking about the sea monster.

"The tourist high-season is coming," said Señor Rojas, who owned a Jeep that he rented to tourists. "We can't let anyone know we have a sea monster hanging around Sosúa Bay."

"But why not?" asked Señora Perez, who sold paintings on the beach. "It could be a tourist **attraction**. Plenty people may decide to come here just to see it."

Half the folks whispered, "He's right." And the other half said, "She's the one who's right."



Summarize

Summarize what happened after the narrator went home.



It looked as if we were going to have a big debate on our porch just like the ones that take place when it is a presidential election year. The way everyone was carrying on, soon we would be having people writing *merengues* about the sea monster and there would be sea monster fiestas all over the place just like during elections.

I shook my head and just listened to everyone as I ate a plate heaped high with food. That poor sea monster, I thought.

Then the people began to make a Plan. When Dominicans get together and decide to make a plan, watch out, because there are plans, and then there are Plans, and this was definitely a PLAN!



The first thing the people decided was that someone had to keep watch over this sea monster. Well, everyone looked around to see who would volunteer. That's when we knew the PLAN would not work because no one wanted to do something so stupid as to go down to the sea and watch for the sea monster.

It was Angela who got the bright idea that since I saw it first, I could keep watch over it from my gri gri tree. Everyone turned to me and nodded their heads.

"Finally, a good reason for her to be up there all the time," I heard Señora Garcia whisper.

Papi was looking at me and nodding his head, proud that his daughter was selected for such an important job. I said, Okay, I would do it.

Then the PLAN continued. Half the people wanted to make signs and announce that Sosúa Bay had a new visitor and it was a one-of-a-kind sea monster. The other half of the crowd shook their heads and said, No, it was too obvious.

"We must be subtle about a delicate matter like this," said Señora Perez. "We must make up a wonderful story about this sea monster, give it a name, make it a friendly monster, and then tell the world. Otherwise all we will do is scare everyone away from this side of the island."

She had a point. A story about the sea monster was much better than a big billboard with an arrow pointing "This way to Sea Monster of Sosúa Bay!"

The idea of it all made me giggle. Wait until Guarío came home and heard all this. I could hardly wait for him to return from the restaurant.

"Well," said Señor Rojas, "what will we name the sea monster?"

"And who knows how to write a story about it anyway?" asked Señor Garcia.

Señora Perez shrugged her shoulders. "I don't know how to write too good, but we could make up something."

Then Mami, who was usually quiet during these kinds of **discussions**, spoke up loud and clear. "Ana Rosa would be the best person to write a story about the sea monster."

I was shocked. This wasn't the same Mami who worshiped silence.

People began to shake their heads. "A child to do something so important?" they whispered.

"Yes," said Mami. "Let us give her a notebook to write in and she will write us a story about the sea monster. If we don't like it, someone else can try."

The way Mami said it, so definite and firm, made people nod their heads in agreement. "Well it doesn't hurt to let her try," they said.

So Señor Garcia went and brought back a notebook from his *colmado*. Mami gave it to me and her hands were cold like the river.

While the grown-ups stayed up late on the porch talking and drinking and eating, I went inside and began to write a story about the sea monster. First I tried to give him a name. But I couldn't think of a good one. So instead I thought about what he looked like. Then I imagined what he must feel like living all alone in the sea, different from all of the other sea creatures.

The fish and animals in the ocean were probably afraid of his huge size and his big nose and long, swishing tail. And they probably didn't want to play with him. Maybe they whispered about how strange he looked. But the sea monster wanted a friend. Deep down, I understood exactly how the sea monster must feel.

I began to write. I wrote page after page in the notebook the people had given to me. When I was finished, it was almost midnight. I went to the porch. Everyone was still there laughing and talking and some were dancing to the music on the radio.

Children were asleep on their mothers' and fathers' laps. Some of the bigger children were **sprawled** out on a blanket on the floor and the *merengue* music was a background lullaby for them.



Summarize

What kind of plans do the villagers make to publicize the sea monster, and how do these plans lead to the narrator's story?



When the people saw me, they got quiet. Someone turned off the radio. Some woke the children on their laps. Papi moved from his chair and put his arms around my shoulders. He led me to the front of the porch.

Then everyone watched me and waited. I stood there trembling, holding that notebook with my story close to my heart. I knew right then that this was it. The whole world would find out about me.

I stopped thinking. I just started to read. I did not look at anyone, not Papi, or Mami or Angela. I read and read until I turned to the last page of the story. There the other sea creatures invite the lonely sea monster to a big underwater fiesta, even though there is no one else like him around, and even though he is so big that he knocks over many of them with his big nose and tail.

“And the sea monster is so happy that he leaps out of the ocean, sending sparkling waves all around him in a giant ring of light.”

I looked up then and I saw many things at once. I saw Papi sitting on the edge of his chair, strange and silent. I saw Mami with her hands folded and her head bowed as if praying. I saw the neighbors smiling and nodding their heads. Then I saw Guario, who must have walked up to the edge of the porch while I was reading.

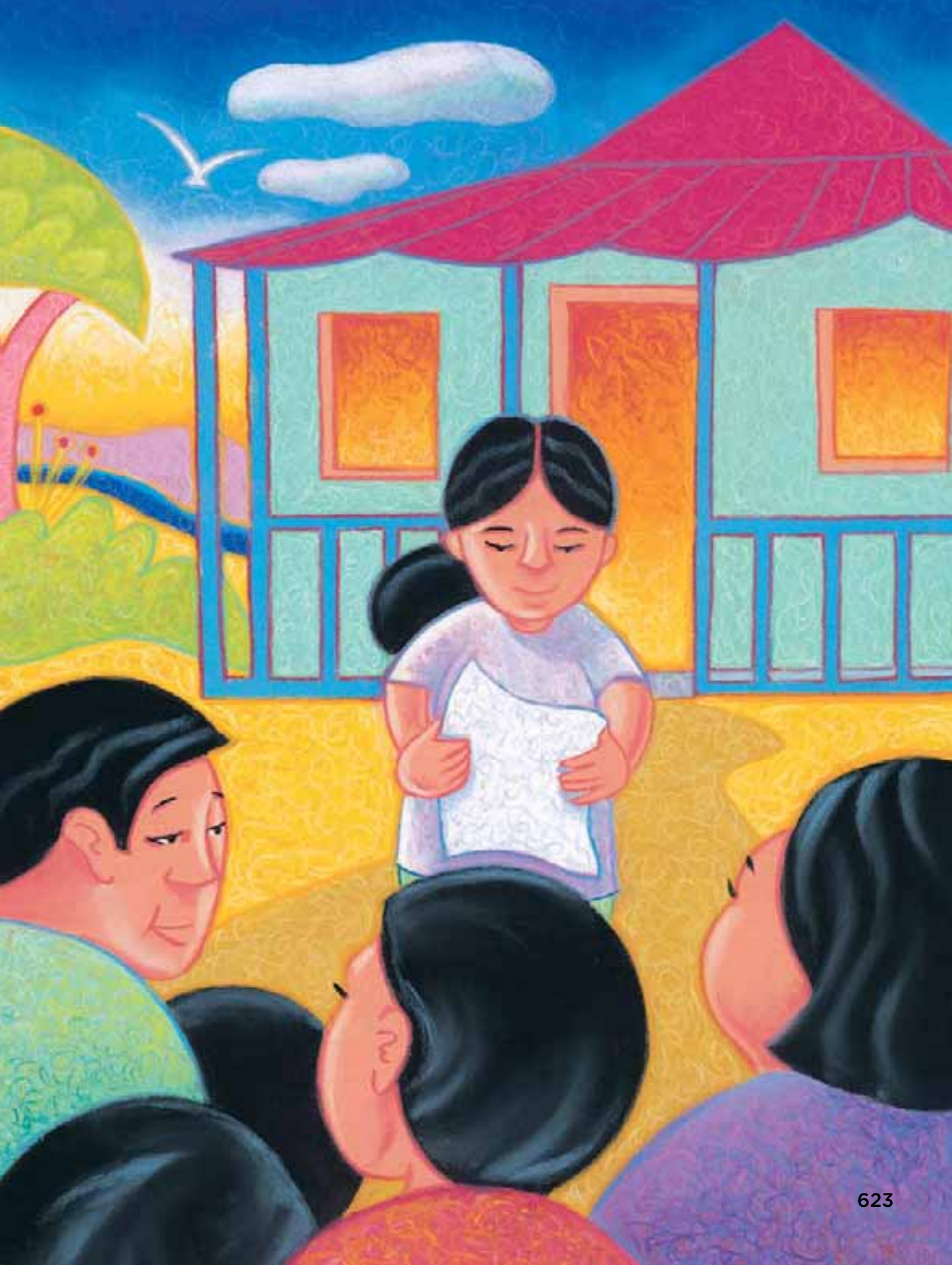
It was Guario’s face I **focused** on. He was smiling. My big strong brother who worried about our future, my serious Guario who almost never smiled, suddenly let out a loud whoop and grabbed me up. He spun me around and around.

“Little sister, I am buying you a new notebook every month no matter what!” he shouted.

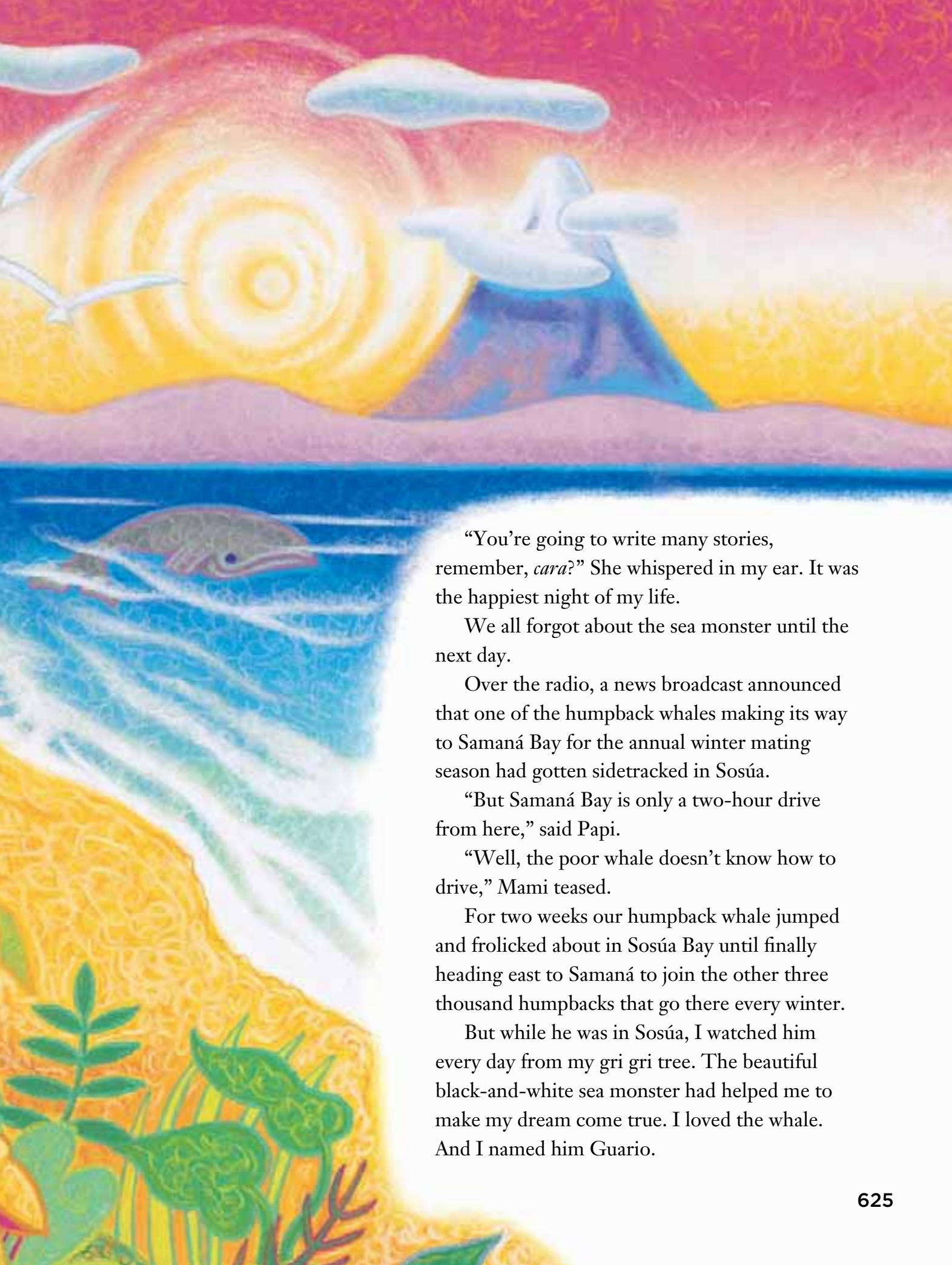
I closed my eyes so I wouldn’t start crying there in front of all the neighbors. Guario always kept his promises. I would be able to write down everything now, everything I thought or dreamed or felt or saw or wondered about. I was so happy I thought I would leap as high as the sea monster.

Then, in the background, I heard clapping. The people had stood up from their chairs and were clapping for me.

I heard shouts of how great my story was and people congratulating Papi and kissing Mami’s cheeks telling them how lucky it was that I was so smart. I heard Mami saying it had nothing to do with luck. I grinned and went over to her. She put her arms around me and squeezed my shoulders.







“You’re going to write many stories, remember, *cara*?” She whispered in my ear. It was the happiest night of my life.

We all forgot about the sea monster until the next day.

Over the radio, a news broadcast announced that one of the humpback whales making its way to Samaná Bay for the annual winter mating season had gotten sidetracked in Sosúa.

“But Samaná Bay is only a two-hour drive from here,” said Papi.

“Well, the poor whale doesn’t know how to drive,” Mami teased.

For two weeks our humpback whale jumped and frolicked about in Sosúa Bay until finally heading east to Samaná to join the other three thousand humpbacks that go there every winter.

But while he was in Sosúa, I watched him every day from my gri gri tree. The beautiful black-and-white sea monster had helped me to make my dream come true. I loved the whale. And I named him Guarío.

A Whale of a Time with Lynn Joseph and Marla Baggetta

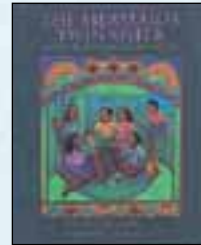
Lynn Joseph grew up in Trinidad, an island in the West Indies. While growing up Lynn was good with words and loved learning. Today she combines both passions in her two jobs. Besides being an author, Lynn is a lawyer in New York City. Her talent with words comes in handy by allowing her to make her case in court and on paper. Lynn has two sons and a new home in the Dominican Republic.



Other books by Lynn Joseph:

*A Wave in Her Pocket:
Stories from Trinidad*

*The Mermaid's Twin Sister:
More Stories from Trinidad*



Marla Baggetta is an artist and illustrator whose work has appeared nationally in galleries, books, advertisements, and magazines. She graduated from art school in Pasadena, California. She lives with her husband and two sons in West Linn, Oregon.



Find out more about Lynn Joseph and Marla Baggetta at www.macmillanmh.com

Author's Purpose

Although the author's main purpose in writing *The Gri Gri Tree* is to entertain, realistic fiction includes true-to-life details. What details here are realistic?

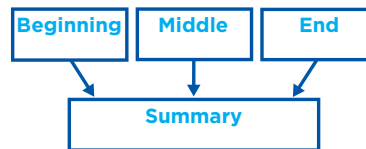


Comprehension Check



Summarize

Use your Summary Chart to help you summarize “The Gri Gri Tree.” When you prepare your summary, be sure to include only important events and details.



Think and Compare

1. Summarize what you know of Ana Rosa’s story about the sea monster. Explain why the author did not include Ana Rosa’s story within “The Gri Gri Tree.” **Generate Questions: Summarize**
2. Reread the last three paragraphs on page 622. Explain what everyone will find out about Ana Rosa. **Analyze**
3. The gri gri tree is a special place for Ana Rosa. Describe a place that is special to you. Explain what it is about this place that makes it special. **Apply**
4. Ana Rosa’s brother is always **focused** on “what tomorrow was going to bring.” Do you think people should consider what might await them in the future? Why or why not? **Evaluate**
5. Reread “A Song For Makaio” on pages 606–607. How is Ana Rosa like Makaio? How do others react to each of these characters? Use details from both selections to support your answer. **Reading/Writing Across Texts**

The LARGEST Creature on Earth

by Yolanda Robertson

Science

Genre

Informational Nonfiction

provides information about real people, living things, places, situations, or events.



Text Feature

Graphs are diagrams that show the relationships among objects. They make it easy to compare different amounts or sizes.

Content Vocabulary

mammals

traits

organisms

carnivores

What is the largest animal that ever lived on Earth? Do you think it is a dinosaur? Guess again! It's the blue whale, and it is still on Earth today. A blue whale can grow to be as long as a nine story building turned on its side. The blue whale is so vast that its heart alone weighs about 1,000 pounds and is about the size of a small car.

The blue whale is just one kind of whale. There are many members of the whale family, including porpoises and dolphins. All of these animals belong to the family of sea creatures called Cetaceans. The name *Cetacean* comes from the Latin word *cetus*, meaning large sea animal, and from

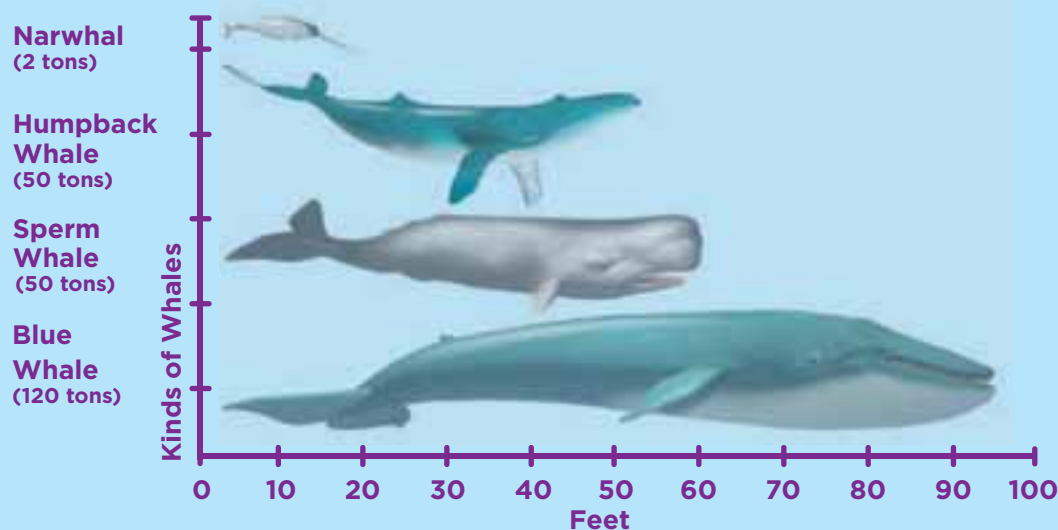
the Greek word *ketos* meaning sea monster.

Despite living in water, whales are not enormous fish. Like human beings, whales are **mammals**. All mammals share common **traits**, such as using lungs to breathe air and nursing their young. Mammals are warm-blooded, have a heart with four chambers, and have hair. They generally live on land, but whales and manatees are two mammals that spend their entire lives in the water. Unlike humans who use their noses to breathe, whales breathe air through blowholes on top of their heads. There are two main groups of whales—baleen whales and toothed whales. Each has special traits.

Big Whales, Bigger Whales!

Reading a Graph

You can use this graph to compare the weights and lengths of four kinds of whales.





Baby humpback whale

Baleen Whales

Baleen whales have two blowholes. Instead of teeth they have baleen plates or comb-like structures that strain food from the water. These enormous whales have hundreds of baleen plates. The largest baleen whale is the blue whale. Similar to an enormous vacuum cleaner, a blue whale will suck in and eat up to 8,000 pounds per day of tiny, shrimp-like **organisms** called krill.

Like all other whales, baleen whales live in pods, or small groups. These whales also “sing” to each other. Many whales communicate by singing. The blue whale’s songs are the loudest, even louder than a jumbo jet. Scientists think the baleen whale with the most complex songs is the humpback whale. Male humpbacks make very distinct types of clicks and whistles. Some of their songs can last for thirty minutes. You can even buy recordings of

humpback whale songs. However, female humpback whales do not sing. One theory scientists have is that males are probably using this whale music to court female humpback whales.

Toothed Whales

A toothed whale has one blowhole and many teeth. The largest of the toothed whales is the sperm whale. Its brain alone weighs up to 20 pounds and is the largest of any animal. Sperm whales are **carnivores**, and they eat about 2,000 pounds of food a day. Their favorite food is the giant squid, but they also eat fish and octopus.

Two other toothed whales that are much smaller than the sperm whale are the porpoise and the dolphin. A quick look at these three creatures makes it difficult to believe that they are related, but a close study will reveal shared traits. One thing that sperm whales, dolphins, and porpoises all do is “fluking.” Fluking is the way in which these whales dive for food. They start by lifting their tails into the air. This helps them pick up speed so that they can plunge down and feed in deeper waters.



Fluking tooth whale

Unicorn or Whale?

The strange-looking narwhal is a toothed whale that lives in the Arctic Ocean. The male narwhal is known for its long tooth, called a tusk, which looks like a long, pointed broomstick. The narwhal's special tooth grows out of the front of its head and can be up to ten feet long. Years ago, before they knew about narwhals, some people thought these tusks came from unicorns.

Scientists know about more than 80 kinds of Cetaceans, and they believe that there may be more types

of whales that have not yet been discovered. So the next time you are at the ocean, watch for whales. Maybe you'll discover a new breed of Cetaceans!



Male narwhal with tusk

Connect and Compare



1. Look at the graph on page 629. What are the differences in weight and length between blue and sperm whales? **Reading a Graph**
2. Based on the information in the article, how is the mouth structure of baleen whales suited for their diet of krill? **Analyze**
3. Think about "The Largest Creature on Earth" and *The Gri Gri Tree*. How do you think Ana Rosa would have described a fully grown blue whale? How do you think it would compare to the description given in "The Largest Creature on Earth"? **Reading/Writing Across Texts**



Science Activity

Research three or four whales not mentioned in the article and make a bar graph that compares the weights of each type of whale.



Find out more about whales at www.macmillanmh.com



Writer's Craft

Figurative Language

Writers choose the words of a poem carefully to paint a picture for the reader. They often use **figurative language**, including personification, to describe the sights, sounds, and even smells of a scene.

I used personification when I wrote that dolphins dance and dash.

I described the dolphin as a surfer.

Write a Descriptive Poem

Dolphin Watching

by Manny S.

I watched a dolphin jump so high
It nearly touched the cloudless sky.
And when it came back to the sea,
Its foamy splash delighted me.

Today I watched a dolphin dance.
Its leaps put me into a trance.
Sunlight sparkled on the sea's waves,
Like gleaming gems from distant caves.

Today I watched a dolphin dash.
Its dorsal fin moved like a flash.
It skimmed through waves of white
and green.

No better surfer have I seen.

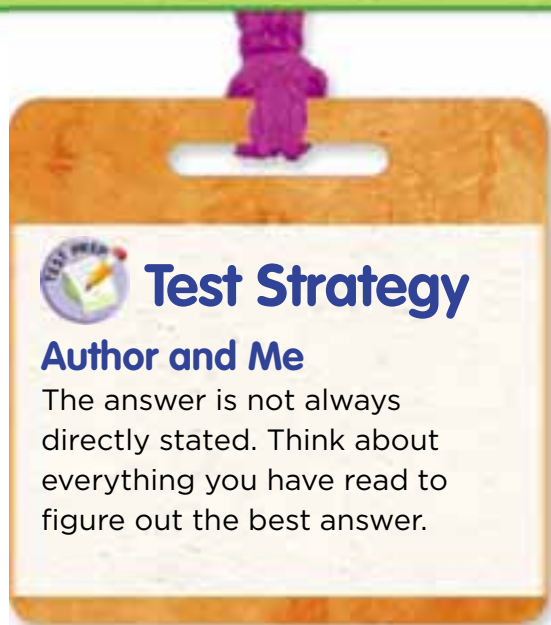
Your Turn

What fascinates you about a body of water? Is it the water itself or the creatures living in it? Choose something about an ocean, lake, or other body of water to describe in a poem. Make every word count as you describe a scene or a creature. Use the writer's checklist to check your writing.



Writer's Checklist

- ☐ **Ideas and Content:** Did I choose **figurative language** to help the reader see what I am describing?
- ☒ **Organization:** Does my poem build in energy, pulling the reader along?
- ☒ **Voice:** Does my poem include my feelings?
- ☒ **Word Choice:** Did I select colorful words that have a strong visual appeal?
- ☒ **Sentence Fluency:** Does my poem have a pleasing rhythm when it is read aloud?
- ☒ **Conventions:** Did I use irregular adjectives correctly? Is every word spelled correctly?



The Work of Giants

by Ming Chen

The Transcontinental Railroad

Today you can board a plane in St. Louis and arrive in San Francisco about four hours later. You might even sit and enjoy a movie while traveling. However, two hundred years ago, that same trip took many weeks. The journey was uncomfortable and often dangerous. Travelers had to cross mountains, rivers, and canyons. They had to face the blazing heat of the deserts and freezing temperatures as they crossed mountains. Many people dreamed of ways to make the trip easier and faster. Their dream was to build a railroad connecting East and West.

Not everyone shared that dream, however. Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, said, “It is perfect insanity, or the next step to it, for anyone to indulge in further discussion about . . . a railroad from the Mississippi to the Pacific Coast . . .” Many Americans agreed with him. The difficulties in building a transcontinental railroad seemed too great.



The Dream Takes Shape

The dreamers won over those who doubted, and plans were drawn for a railway connecting East and West. This was not an easy task. The first problem was deciding on the route. Senators from the North and the South argued for the railway to pass through their states. When the Civil War began, however, the Southern senators left Congress and the Northerners took charge of the plan.

Getting from Here to There

The next problem was getting materials to California. The process took many months. Everything had to be shipped from New York, around South America, and then to San Francisco. From there all materials had to be put on smaller boats for the 120-mile trip to Sacramento, California.

Once the materials and machines were in place, workers had to be hired. Thousands were needed, yet only hundreds could be found. The Civil War and the California gold rush took most men away from railroad work. If not for workers who came from China, the railroad would never have been built.

The Work Begins

In 1863 work on the railroad finally began. The Union Pacific started building west from the Mississippi River. The Central Pacific moved east from Sacramento. At first construction was slow. Crews had to drill through solid rock in places. They had to build bridges across rivers and ravines.

While some workers finished the track, other workers were building the rail cars. One news reporter wrote from the Union Pacific Railroad shop in Omaha, Nebraska:

The lumber used is of three kinds, oak, ash and pine, all brought from Chicago and cut into proper lengths and thicknesses for the object designed. The material is first run through the planer, which smooths it; from there to the saw and again to the planer;

Answer Questions

then to the . . . machines, till it is at last ready for men employed for framing and bolting the car on the trucks which rest on the rails, extending through the whole length of the building. When the car is finished, it is transferred to the painting department, receives its different coats and stripes, and is then run back to the drying room. In this department there are three hundred and fifty hands employed . . . and the average wages of the men is about \$3.50 each per day . . .

All the problems were finally solved. Six years later the two crews met in Promontory, Utah. Through a great deal of money, the backbreaking work of thousands, and many risks, a railroad linking the East and West coasts of North America became a reality.

Building the Transcontinental Railroad truly was a heroic effort. William Tecumseh Sherman, a famous Civil War general, wrote in a letter to his brother: "If it is ever built, it will be the work of giants."

Railroad

Engine

Fierce and smoky,

Roaring, belching, slashing

Slicing up the grassy prairie

Wild beast



Tip

You have to think about the entire selection to choose the best answer.

Directions: Answer the questions.**1. What is the theme of the selection?**

- A** The Transcontinental Railroad should not have been built.
- B** Building the Transcontinental Railroad took tremendous effort.
- C** The problems in building the Transcontinental Railroad were minor.
- D** Important people with money made the Transcontinental Railroad possible.

2. Which of these BEST describes the viewpoints of the poet and the author of the selection?

- A** Both believe that the work on the railroads was a positive influence.
- B** The author thinks the railway is great, and the poet does not.
- C** Both writers are angry about the hardships of working on the railroad.
- D** The poet thinks the work was worthwhile, but the author does not.

3. What does the word *construction* mean on page 635?

- A** moving from one place to another
- B** taking something apart
- C** the act of building something
- D** the process of clearing land

4. The news reporter's account of the railroad shop is an example of a primary source. Why do you think it is included here?**5. Why was the building of the railroad called the work of giants? What challenges did the railroad workers face? Use details from the selection to support your answer.****Writing Prompt**

Write a speech to persuade people to work on the railroad. Include the benefits and hardships workers will have to face. Your speech should be at least three paragraphs long.

